

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Public Relations & Community Outreach Consulting Services

City of Ridgecrest, California



Proposals are due November 14, 2013 at 5:00 p.m.

www.ridgecrest-ca.gov.

Questions – Contact in writing:

Rachel Ford, City Clerk

City of Ridgecrest

rford@ci.ridgecrest.ca.us

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Public Relations & Community Outreach Consulting Services

City of Ridgecrest, California

This Request for Proposals (RFP) has been prepared by the City of Ridgecrest in order to retain the services of a Public Relations and Community Outreach Consultant to provide service and support to the City of Ridgecrest.

For the purpose of this RFP, "City" means the City of Ridgecrest, and "Services" means public relations and community outreach consulting services, as described in this RFP.

The selected firm will be invited to enter into a consultant agreement with the City, in a form provided by the City ("Agreement"). The City Council has the ultimate authority to approve any proposal and to authorize execution of the Agreement.

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KEY DATES:

Release of RFP October 16, 2013

Questions Due November 4, 2013

Issuance of Response to Questions November 7, 2013

RFP Due Date November 14, 2013 at 5:00 p.m.

Selection of Firm December 18, 2013

Expected Effective Date of Consultant Agreement January 6, 2014

COMMUNITY OVERVIEWRidgecrest History –

In 1943 the Naval Ordnance Testing Station (NOTS) was established at the Inyokern Airport, which was then called Harvey Field. Following the end of World War II, Harvey Field was deactivated and NOTS aviation operations were transferred to the new Armitage Field at China Lake. Thousands of construction workers, military men and their families settled in the area between the mid to late 1940s, causing a housing boom in the area. In 1943, Ridgecrest had grown to 15 homes and 96 residents. By the 1950s, the population of Ridgecrest exceeded 5000. This population boom led to the development of numerous businesses and facilities, including the Ridgecrest Community Hospital. In 1963 the City of Ridgecrest incorporated.

Through the following decades, the City was highly impacted by the changes in NOTS, later China Lake Naval Weapons Center (NWC) and now the Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake. Today, the City still shares an integral symbiotic role with China Lake, providing housing, and community services for the installation. Located in the northeast corner of Kern County, Ridgecrest sits at the edge of the Mojave Desert in the Indian wells valley and is surrounded by four mountain ranges. With a population of approximately 28,000 Ridgecrest is the county's third largest city.

City of Ridgecrest Economic Base –

The City of Ridgecrest is fast becoming the regional retail center for Eastern Kern, Inyo County, and portions of San Bernardino County with the introduction of several new, big-box retailers and its position as the largest community in the region. Ridgecrest is well-positioned to continue its retail expansion. In addition to the added retail, economic indicators have greatly improved in the last couple of years.

Ridgecrest's workforce currently has an approximate two to one ratio of white collar (managerial/professional) jobs to blue collar (industrial/service) jobs, respectively. With sustained employment at NAWS China Lake, growth in research and development professional occupations as well as support/ service jobs are envisioned to continue.

Ridgecrest boasts many more hotel and motel rooms than cities of comparable size primarily due to the demands generated by the Naval Air Weapons Station and secondarily from tourism.

Following is demographic information pertaining to the City. Other information can be found on the City's web site at www.ridgecrest-ca.gov.

Population	27,616
Area	21.1 Square Miles
County	Kern
State	California
Government	Council-Manager
Median Home Value	\$140,000
Households	12,025
Average Household Size	2.6 People
Median Age	34.3
Median Household Income	\$66,423
Distance to Los Angeles	154 Miles

PROJECT SCOPE

The City of Ridgecrest is soliciting proposals from Public Relations and Community Outreach professionals to provide service and guidance to the City in order to increase the level and quality of effective communication to the public. An Agreement for twelve months is anticipated; assuming mutual satisfaction, the contract may be renewed for additional periods.

DUTIES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH CONSULTANT

The selected consultant will assist the City in development and execution of a Communications Plan for effective, timely communication with the public. At the direction of the City Manager, the consultant will provide support to the City Council, City Commissions, and staff and is expected to provide service in a uniform, non-discriminatory manner. The work of the consultant shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Develop a Communications Plan for consistent, informative communication from the City to the public regarding actions of the City Council and staff, and regarding City programs, services, and initiatives. The consultant should initiate ideas on when and how to inform the public, and carry out the tasks as directed by the City Manager.
2. Review existing policies and draft new communication and media policies relating to City communications.
3. Develop and execute a strategy to improve all forms of communication available to the City with the public which includes the City's government access channel (K41GO/Cable Channel 6), web site, Face book, Twitter, and other forms of communication as recommended by the consultant.
4. Arrange for, and coordinate, media coverage of issues before the City, including organizing press conferences and interviews and arranging appearances on appropriate media outlets. Provide guidance to City representatives in advance of public appearance and media coverage events, as directed by the City.
5. Assist in development of educational materials, news stories, and briefing documents on current issues as well as long term matters, to ensure the quality and consistency of information provided to the public. This will include writing technical information in easily readable and understandable form and issuing press releases prior to and following meetings.
6. Make recommendations to the City for more timely, transparent and effective communication with residents, businesses, and guests of the City.

QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE

A Bachelor's Degree in Communications, Journalism, Public Administration, English, or Political Science is required; a Master's Degree is preferred.

A minimum of five years of professional experience in communications is required, including experience in the Central California area.

The proposal must include a certification that the consultant will provide sufficient depth of personnel such that work load, absences or illness will not interfere with provision of services to the City. Joint ventures are eligible.

CONTENTS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal should include the following components:

Methodology – for project approach

1. A concise but detailed narrative indicating the proposed approach to providing the required services. The consultant's methodology should be included, describing how the consultant will approach each task and initiative and what will be included in the billing to the City. Include a description of the types of services to be provided and a budget for a typical month, showing estimated number of hours and hourly billing rate, and an estimate of reimbursable costs, if any.

The proposal should include an hourly cost of service and a rate based on assignments by project. Assume that the consultant will work a minimum of 16 hours per week pursuant to the Agreement, with additional hours as approved by the City. In the event of an emergency, the consultant may be contacted at any time of day. Include if there would be an additional cost to "emergency response" and at what rate that service would be provided.

2. A completed "Consulting Services Questionnaire" using the format attached as Appendix A. Any sub consultants proposed to be used must also submit a completed Questionnaire. If an association or joint venture is contemplated, the expertise of each individual firm should be clearly defined as well as the level of involvement of each individual firm and the proposed means of coordination between firms.

3. Not more than five samples of work done by the individuals who would be assigned to the City under the Agreement, including printed public information materials and related work plan(s) for typical project(s).

4. Identification of the method by which progress reports and performance measurements will be provided to the City.

5. This Request for Proposals states that "assuming mutual satisfaction, the contract may be renewed for additional periods". Please include as a section of the proposed budget the terms under which the consultant would be willing to renew for each of two subsequent 12 month periods.

6. The consultant's proposed budget should assume that the printing and distribution of printed documents will be performed at the cost of the City; those costs need not be included.

7. A minimum of three references from agencies to which the consultant has provided services comparable to the services identified and described in this RFP.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Professional City Staff will evaluate all properly submitted proposals, and will grade and rank all proposals with respect to the Project Scope and the requirements set forth in this Request for Proposals, including without limitation, the consultant fee, responsiveness of the proposal. The criteria for evaluation are set forth as follows:

1. Responsiveness to this RFP.
2. Experience of the professional personnel in the region, particularly with local governments/agencies.
3. Quality of work samples presented.
4. Scope and appropriateness of services proposed; clear understanding by the applicant of work to be performed.
5. Capability of providing consistent, timely responses, as determined by the availability of "back up" staff if principals are unavailable and by information requested from references.
6. Billing proposal.

The City will then select the top preferred firm, with whom an Agreement will be executed, on a form to be provided by the City. The City Council has the ultimate authority to approve any proposal and to authorize execution of the Agreement.

The City reserves the right to make clarifications, corrections, or changes in this Request for Proposals at any time prior to the deadline for the submission of proposals. All proposers or prospective proposers will be informed of said clarifications, corrections, or changes so long as the proposers and prospective proposers register with the City via e-mail to rford@ci.ridgecrest.ca.us prior to the due date for proposals.

PROPOSAL PROCESS

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be made in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. on November 4, 2013. Questions may be sent to the following:

Rachel Ford, City Clerk

rford@ci.ridgecrest.ca.us

Email confirmation will be made for all questions received within 24 hours of receipt.

Five copies, in addition to an electronic copy of the proposal, plus samples of work products as detailed herein must be received by the City no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 14, 2013. Proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation committee of the City of Ridgecrest. Proposals must be addressed to the following contact:

Rachel Ford, City Clerk

City of Ridgecrest

100 West California Avenue, Ridgecrest, California 93555

Tel.: 760-499-5002; Email: rford@ci.ridgecrest.ca.us

The report of the evaluation committee will be provided to the City Manager and City Council. The evaluation committee may interview one or more of the respondents. It is anticipated that the selection process will be completed during the months of November and December, 2013.

Proposals will not be opened publically. No oral, telephone, or facsimile proposals will be considered.

STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Proposals submitted are offers only, and the decision to accept or reject is a function of quality, reliability, capability, reputation, and expertise of the firms submitting proposals. Issuance of this RFP does not obligate the City to pay any costs incurred by a respondent in its submission of a proposal or making any necessary studies or designs for the preparation of that proposal, or for procuring or contracting for the services to be furnished under this RFP.

A proposer may withdraw its proposal, either personally or by written request, at any time prior to the deadline for submittals. No proposal shall be withdrawn for 60 days after the date set for opening proposals. Proposals shall be subject to acceptance during this period.

The City reserves the right to accept the proposal that is, in its judgment, the best and most favorable to the interests of the City and to the public; to reject the proposal with the lowest consultant fee; to accept any item of any proposal; to reject any and all proposals; and to waive irregularities and informalities in any proposal submitted or in the RFP process; provided, however, that the waiver of any prior defect or informality shall not be considered a waiver of any future or similar defect or informality. Firms should not rely upon, or anticipate, such waivers in submitting their proposal.

APPENDIX A – CONSULTING SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following (use separate sheet if necessary):

1. Company Name or Sole Proprietor.
2. Personnel assigned to serve as project lead for the City of Ridgecrest, including name and title.
3. Current Business Address.
4. Business Telephone.
5. Years in business at above address.
6. List names and addresses of all officers of the corporation, partners in the partnership or managers and members in the limited liability company.
7. Include brief resumes of key persons anticipated for this project. Please include the following:
 - a. Name and title
 - b. Project assignment
 - c. Years experience with the firm representing
 - d. Highest academic degree attained
8. Is submittal a joint venture?
 - a. If so, has joint venture worked together before?
 - b. If a joint venture, name of lead firm.
9. Please confirm that if awarded the Agreement, the proposer can begin operations on January 6, 2014.
10. Provide names of three business references with addresses, phone numbers and relationships:
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.

11. Please indicate the hourly fee proposed and cost proposal based on projects assigned. Assume that the consultant shall work a minimum of 16 hours per week, with additional hours as approved by the City Council.